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Summer Sessions

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SUMMER SESSIONS

Submitted by Diane Hadden



SUMMER SESSIONS 125th UPDATE

Prepared by Diane Hadden

The Summer Sessions office has seen significant change since 1983. The mission has changed from year to year – flexibility in course offerings, fixing the disparity between academic year and summer faculty salary, more involvement by the deans, reducing low enrollment courses, and increasing overall enrollment.

In order to offer the most flexible course schedule many different options were tried. First was the four week pre-summer session followed by an eight week session. By 1995, there were five sessions offered: four week, first six week, eight week, second six week and 12 week. The overlap of sessions proved to be a deterrent to students who were trying to take more than one course. As of 2007, the sessions are three week, first six week, second six week, mid-six week (specifically for educators whose school schedule is not conducive to attendance at other times), nine week and 12 week. Finding the best hour, day, and course offerings has been a constant challenge for the Summer Sessions Director.

Faculty salaries continue to lag behind the academic year salaries and those of other states. However, a raise has been given nearly every summer. UND is fortunate to have a very dedicated group of faculty who are willing to teach in the summer. Others find they can earn more money off campus, or they need to do research and work on publications in order to be eligible for promotion.

The deans have been very cooperative in helping with the success of summer session. Course scheduling, course offerings and allocation of faculty salary dollars are overseen by them. This provides the opportunity to try new courses, cancel those with low enrollment and become more creative in overall offerings. Occasionally, the Summer Sessions Director has provided funding for a new course if it appears that it is needed and will be successful.

Enrollment numbers in the summer have fluctuated but mostly toward increases. One significant decrease was in the summer of 1997 which was the year of the devastating flood. Even though enrollment was down by

15.7%, summer session was still considered to be a great success given the fact that it went on as scheduled. In summer 1983 enrollment was at 2717 and by 2007 it was at 4626.

The UND Strategic Plan which was implemented under President Kupchella addresses additional efforts in targeting underserved and non-traditional populations and increasing the number of undergraduate programs being offered.

A new program was created in Summer 2007 to assist incoming American Indian freshmen in becoming acclimated to campus prior to their first semester. Eight students attended the 2007 summer session, lived in student housing and became familiar with the community. All eight returned in the fall. It is hoped that this will improve the graduation rate among this population.

Non-traditional students are targeted in most departments through all levels of courses. Additionally, the OSHER program through Outreach Services provides non-academic learning experiences for senior citizens.

The number of undergraduate programs offered has increased slightly; most notably in the College of Nursing. This is an effort to address a critical shortage of nurses particularly in rural areas.

The changes in curriculum are a direct result of the changes in the student population and their needs. The College of Education and Human Development (formerly Teaching and Learning) offers many more courses for teachers who are working on advanced degrees or need courses to make lane changes in the school systems. Internships and co-ops have become an integral part of summer for students who are looking to gain paid employment in their career fields. They are able to work, earn money and be enrolled during this experience. In many instances, the company who provides the internship offers employment to the student upon graduation. Additionally, distance degree programs and correspondence and online studies have become extremely popular for students in the summer because they can return home, find a job and not have to pay room and board. The Study Abroad program has gained popularity in summer as students are able to study in another country while being enrolled at UND.

The summer student base has changed over time from the typical student who is enrolled during the academic year to students of all ages who need, and want, to obtain additional credits in the summer. These students are taking courses for professional development, certificate programs, graduate studies, or for no other reason than to graduate sooner. Students have expressed liking summer courses because the class sizes are smaller, they get more individual attention, and they only have to concentrate on one or two classes. Some departments are able to hire faculty of lower ranks which helps with the distribution of salary dollars; however, some departments, especially those with graduate programs, must employ senior faculty in order to serve their student population.

The Summer Sessions office has seen several staff changes. In July, 1994 University College merged with Admissions, Enrollment Services and Orientation and Retention to become Enrollment Services. Summer Sessions reported to Academic Affairs. In September of that year a new director was named. Dr. Donald Piper, who had been a faculty member in the College of Education and Human Development for many years, was appointed director. The Summer Sessions office was moved to Gustafson Hall and the director reported to Dr. Robert Boyd, Dean of Outreach Programs. In 1999, Outreach Programs was changed to Student and Outreach Services. In 2000, Summer Sessions was placed back under the direction of Academic Affairs. Don Piper retired and a new part-time director was named. Dr. Stacie Varnson directed the office until 2005. Diane Hadden became director in December, 2005 and remains in that position at this time. The director continues to report to Academic Affairs and the office is located in Twamley Hall. The position continues to be part-time and there is no support staff.

There is somewhat of a dis-engagement between on campus and off campus summer enrollments due to Summer Sessions reporting to Academic Affairs and all correspondence and off campus enrollment going through the Division of Continuing Education. In an effort to promote a more cohesive relationship between all areas on campus in the summer, President Kupchella formed a Summer Program and Events Council in 2005. This council is co-chaired by the Director of Summer Sessions and the Associate Dean of Outreach Programs. Membership consists of directors from many areas on campus, two faculty members, and a student. The mission of this committee is to promote, market and advocate for all summer programming on the UND campus. Two staff members were hired to support the council

with organizational matters, marketing, and a mini-grant program. The mini-grant program provides funding to eligible faculty and staff who want to turn their ideas into summer programming. The goal is to increase the number of people who make use of the campus in summer.

The Senate Summer Sessions Committee remains a standing committee on campus. This committee is chaired by the Director of Summer Sessions and is made up of faculty members and one student. Its purpose is to provide faculty guidance and oversight in applying academic standards and traditional academic rigor to summer sessions.

The Summer Sessions Office makes a diligent effort in marketing courses and programs to the community and beyond. Much of this can be done with new technology such as a UND and Summer Sessions website along with newspaper and radio ads. The schedule of courses is also available on the web which prompted the paper schedule to be abandoned in 2005 both for summer and the academic year.

